

Alone together...



~~AWOKEN~~
TOGETHER

Community Enlightenment

Awoken Awareness Project

Problem

Loneliness has devastating effects on the minds, bodies and lives of many city dwellers. This leads to a plethora of societal and personal problems, caused mostly by long periods of isolation, with consumerist desires being taken care of, via online-shopping, home-delivery services and availability online, making it a convenient inconvenience.

Process

Being a skilled professional living/working in London, I have personally suffered with feelings of loneliness, slight depression and negative health issues caused by isolation within my home for weeks on end. You would think this is impossible with all the features and facilities on offer, 30 minutes away from the city. However it has taken me three years of artwork to personally understand and work towards resolving this very personal issue.

Solution

The Awoken brand, represents community enlightenment. The logo stands for positive mental & physical health, with real world improvements. Stationed within purpose-built, multi-arts community workshops/centres, designed to improve our overall wellbeing and awareness of environment and self-guided leadership towards more meaningful interactions, with any and all aspects of life.

Loneliness

Loneliness can be defined as 'Sadness because one has no friends or company'. The feeling of loneliness can be summarised as, separate or detached from something or someone – leading to extremely debilitating and greater suffering of both physical and mental health.

But what exactly might you find yourself 'feeling' without? Some might say from loved and cherished ones, for many its deeply personal meaningful interactions, others its just simple happiness and importantly for some individuals, its life itself.

Most will probably not be able to explain why they are feeling lonely. However this is no small issue for any being feeling this way, from countless examples in nature and history, physically or mentally feeling lost can be extremely dangerous in many cases, and dramatically decrease chances of successful survival and general happiness in life.

Clearly and scientifically this shouldn't be the case. Observing the principles of the sciences you will become aware, that the art of all things is mathematics, and is in itself boundless. You only need to artistically look at the world around you, to become enlightened to this truth.

Audience

In sight of the large urban creative arts and music industry flourishing around inner city London and the UK, smaller urban communities are being utilised by independent and upcoming creative artists for 'set' location and the backdrop to their various art formats – in 'Gritty London'. Mostly depicting life as uninspiring and having negative connotations regarding their environment, and is clearly reflected in the art produced.

The programme will establish connections and partnerships with local services and other music industry professionals, sourcing materials, equipment, advice and expertise within the relevant artistic fields to set up necessary facilities and infrastructure such as recording studios, directly designed to help support the needs, interest and requirements of all demographics in need.

- Case in point, Zed'lo ft Simona – Little Town (youtube ref) an amazing real life reflection of many people from a small part of London town, and happens to be the exact location of the life of this very author. Please experience this for yourself before reading on...

Demonstrating real artistic interests, huge abilities and massive potential. These communities are in need of investment to grow into locally run, successful independent industries, into which we can help towards achieving with this very programme. This stays in line with government initiatives such as Sadiq Khans key manifesto 'Creative Enterprise Zones' to "protect the creative sector in the capital, increase affordable spaces for artists and entrepreneurs, and boost job and training opportunities for local people".

Art Courses have been proven to improve mental well being with many studies indicating that it can better the health, safety and education within lower income neighbourhoods. By providing an open art studio and workshops, Awoken will tackle these issues head on to ensure the projects overall objectives are met and exceeded – an empowered and less lonely society.

These facilities will allow the programme to directly offer classes and informed advice for all physical and mental health requirements, enabling them to provide for themselves, train others and contribute further to the wider community.

Awoken will freely offer these programmes with the aim to positively change the lives of people from all demographics within these communities – meeting the needs to change for the socially unaware.

Our Solution

Our proposed solution is based on utilising pre-existing conditions, with a focus to prevent and treat the growing feelings of social isolation and loneliness across all demographics – leading to a multitude of negative personal and social implications. The programme highlights a combination of key enlightening and empowering activities, leading to a rise in confidence and sense of purpose for all.

The Awoken Awareness Project has been formulated out of a desperate need to provide real life enlightenment facilities that lead towards self-directed improvements in the lifestyles of people living in lonely, underprivileged and 'artless' communities.

Our 3-stage awareness programme will focus on providing concise and relevant advice, data, tools, examples and practical demonstration of Health enlightenment, Artistic enlightenment and Practical skills training. Therefore, allowing for an easier transition towards self guided enlightenment and positive future, for all who take part and invest wisely in our most valuable commodity of time. Leaving behind ignorant and mentally draining pursuits – many of the reasons why loneliness exists in the first place.

Health awareness

Physical health is the foundation of a long and fulfilling life, and is key to preventing and tackling the feelings of loneliness and social isolation. Awoken will offer yoga, martial arts, dance and calisthenics based initiatives to combat these issues – leading to increased confidence and willingness for social and progressive interaction.

- **Awoken Yoga**

Awoken Yoga has created its own formulised routine based on many years of experience, practice and study, with proven results. Primarily based around Patanjali Traditional Yoga philosophy, Awoken has formed an entry-level routine as an awakening to the yoga traditions and the promotion of physical health, potentially leading to more advanced Yoga traditions. If further interest is shown, we will refer participants to the Isha Foundation and other more traditional advanced institutions – to give them a further path to enlightenment.

Art awareness

Vision and hearing is our most utilised and valued senses, it allows us to effectively and successfully navigate the world around us. It can be argued and in cases proven, the quality of the environment around us, can directly affect the conscious mind. This is provable, just by simply walking into a space like a museum, art gallery or concert hall, and the science of artistic vision and sound can trigger the mind inspiring creativity and positive mind states. Thus, leading to personal improvements and benefits in mental and physical health – reducing the need for less interaction and feelings of infinite isolation.

Skilled Apprenticeship

By providing access to employment industries of interest would prove to be more fulfilling and allow industries to benefit from locally skilled focused workforce. Japanese traditions of Metallurgy, Sashimono and many other craft skills, that has enabled Japan to pioneer and lead the world in construction technology for many years. An Example of skills based tradition that should not be over looked or forgotten.

By offering new insightful examples of lifestyles and health options, such as AWOKEN Yoga routine, Martial arts, Dance, plus many other physical health activities in a suitable community space. Catering to self-expression via the written WORD or Audio and visual exploration via our creative, state of the art AWOKEN arts studios. Gaining real world, craft-skills within our fully fitted out AWOKEN Apprenticeship workshops. We can hopefully, make life seem more fulfilling for those dispatched to a meaningful experience, on their own terms.

Meditation

Focused breath, focused mind.



Self-defense

Confidence and self preservation



Yoga

Physical and Mental union.



Herbology

Natural nutrition and medication



The Word

Documented expression of philosophy



Science

Observation of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics



Freedom

Realisation of infinite potential



"Understanding and interacting with life artistically, has enabled many visionaries towards a higher awareness of self. Inside this Universe we observe ourselves, centred."

"Not everyone who is quiet is depressed.
Not everyone with a qualification is intelligent
and not everyone without a lover is lonely."

Anthony Anaxagorou

Conclusion

The project will aim to identify the needs, requirements and interests of individuals through one, two or all of these components initially. Later on encouraging them to pursue all avenues at hand, offered by the project. Later outlining any suggested areas of improvement, with tailored adjustments to suit the requirement and pace of the individual, making full use of the projects facilities.

Overall aiming to provide options for the community, which will result in the better overall mental and physical health of residents, community cohesion and more prospects for individuals/groups within the area, hopefully tackling the main adverse conditions suffered by many urban communities such as lower levels of education, lower living standards, lower expectation and self esteem/confidence, lower social and community engagement – leading to increased levels of loneliness and social isolation. This will further result in higher levels of poor health issues, both mental and physical, higher levels of poverty, drug miss-use/dependencies, higher levels of violent crimes and dangerous social mind-sets, mostly based around fear and/or ignorance, and suffering as a whole. All of which has led to increased social isolation and loneliness.

From this programme, members will gain an added Physical and Mental confidence boost with other benefits, by further understanding the sciences of the body, a self guided passion towards a more fulfilled life, via the direct exposure to art of all types, the necessary hand-eye skills and mathematical mind-set needed to positively construct their futures. Delivered and constructed by informed, passionate and dedicated individuals from within the community where possible, looking to feed back their experiences and time – with state backed subsidiaries.

Allowing any participator to independently sustain their path towards self-declared freedoms and enlightening achievements towards workable goals, greatly effecting their precious time and communities. We have highlighted some key issues that the programme will aim to remedy on an on-going basis. These include mental & physical health issues, anti-social behaviour, drug addiction, gang and substance related violence – all of which can lead to a path of self-destruction and loneliness.

We have seen how many unnecessary life debilitating co-dependencies are sustained, largely due to minimal or even lack of investment in prevention and treatment programmes & small community-based infrastructure (e.g. parks, art centres, workshops, galleries or other types of socially interacting facilities), which would directly inject the correct opportunity and prospects, leading to social mobility and independence from said co-dependencies and the state welfare system and overall over policing of these community. This awareness could start to correct, most of these undesirable social ills. And provide the environment for social tolerance and education to remove the dark clouds of loneliness that affects us all.

HIKIKOMORI: CASE STUDY

Please take time to observe the growing pandemic of psychological loneliness and self-isolation first noticed in Japan around 2010, known locally as Hikikomori.

"Hikikomori" is a Japanese term meaning pulling inward, related to long-term self-confinement and seeking extreme degrees of isolation. Also referring to both the social and personal aspect of these lonely modern day Hermits. Set within the context of being one of the worlds most densely populated metropolis. Tokyo, situated in the mystical, Volcanic Island nation of Japan. In comparison to "thrive hive" London and our rich green, pleasant U.K.

Since the end of WW2, the huge damages inflicted by the 2 nuclear bombs (Hiroshima & Nagasaki) during the conflicts, recovering physically was difficult to say the least. Less then 50 years later Japan would go on to rapidly develop towards becoming a Global super power, ranked 3rd richest country by Forbes in 2015.

The Japanese have long been known as a very skilful nation in all aspects of their unique, timeless culture. Personally advancing and pioneering industrial standards for many years, demonstrating masterful levels of efficiency and supreme skill in technology, engineering, craftsmen-ship, Martial arts and genuinely high living standards - a true demonstration in the ART of life, living and being. Also Japan has one of the best qualities of life, with the longest life expectancies of mankind and a total population of 126.71 million as of 2017.

However in the last few years, Japans population has stagnated and started to slowly decline, leaving an ever-aging society, without increasing progeny. Allowing a huge portion of the population, mostly highly skilled single professionals, to become more isolated due to their cultural single mindedness regarding duty towards perfection. Often pushing them towards feelings of extreme loneliness and isolation. This has lead towards many mental and physical health issues and undesirable social consequences. With increasing levels of suicide related deaths, social dis-attachment and negative engagement, with this mostly aging adult segment of the population.

The Light at the end of the tunnel for some is the network of outreach and craft apprenticeship programmes, designed around social and community involvement. Mostly relating to the interests of the locally effected population. Some of these programmes are based around relatable Art formats such as Manga and Gaming, the two most popular pass times of the population in Japan. Here sufferers are able to find kinship in other like-minded individuals, leading to more opportunity for positive and meaningful interactions within the respective communities.

In 2017, the launch of a new social enterprise called Mecha Koma employed around 20 suffers of hikikomori for their web design company. Founder and visionary, Kei Sato describes how building confidence through work can give a sense of empowerment and purpose. Mecha Koma says, "We see potential." That's what's transformative. That creates the conditions that build confidence: the willingness to reach out to someone who is isolated and to say, "I see you and I believe in you." This initiative has given hikikomori a voice in Japan and support system of positive change. However this is a just start of addressing this, uniquely modern phenomena and is no way a cure or solution, to tackle the problem as a whole.

Over-here in London and other major European based cities, we are starting to see the same social isolation issues, mostly due to a combination of advancement in technology, allowing anyone to be confined in their homes for extended periods of time utilising our ever more convenient online shopping and home delivery services. Moreover, due to a lack of local socially engaging facilities within local communities and social housing estates, ironically within these modern utopic landscapes.

We have observed a rise in physical and mental health issues, across most demographics of our society, this will inevitably start weigh heavily on our Public Services as a whole. We feel this could possibly be due to the lack of personal and community awareness, along with a reduction in meaningful engagement, both socially and personally.

Resulting in higher numbers of anxiety related health issues, reduced confidence leading to absents of social and personal interaction. Further, leading to unchecked psychological health issues with an increased likeliness of loneliness among all social groups here in the U.K. These are issues that must be tackled head on, with a focus to develop a fully functioning programme of positive change and transformation.

3 stage awareness programme

Health

Yoga

Yoga has grown into a £74bn industry globally in recent years with people turning to the art for mental and physical health improvements. In 2016, the word 'yoga' was one of the top 15 searched words on Google in the UK, showing the growing interest and positive reputation that Yoga is having for people of all ages.

There have been multiple studies supporting the major mental and physical health benefits of Yoga for both healthy and ill people. In 2007, a breakthrough study by Chris Streeter and his team scientifically proved that just one hour of asana yoga practice by an experienced yoga practitioner correlated with statistically significant increase in the chemical GABA, which acts as the chief inhibitory neurotransmitter in your brain. In 2010, Streeter found that there was a significant increase in GABA levels for people who were doing yoga compared to walking. People with depression, stress, anxiety and chronic pain usually display lower levels of GABA, resulting in the inability to shift their psychological reaction and behaviours. The overall findings of the study support the hypothesis that regular yoga practice is beneficial to these conditions, both physically and mentally, potentially meaning a more holistic and cost effective alternative to common medicines.

Thomas Ross further proved this in a review study in 2010. It concluded that yoga is as effective or better at improving a wide variety of physical and mental health measures such as mood states, stress, quality of life, pulmonary function and heart rate variability than less holistic remedies.

Calisthenics

A popular new inner city full body workout system, designed for small space/ infrastructure of reasonably low costs, both initial and running. We have outlined Calisthenics as a key element to help achieve our objective of improving both physical and mental health. Below is a detailed outline of a study by Ewan Thomas that supports our aims.

Self Defence / Martial arts

Due to the countless numbers of young people in London, UK and the rest of the world, being killed, injured or harmed with senseless violence, mostly from their own peers fuelled by gang/trap mentality due to ignorance and disassociation. We feel that having lived and faced this personally, we have realised that self-discipline and physical mastery enables one to navigate life without the need for mindless violence or anti social behaviour, which is typically stemmed from fear, anger and low self-confidence in most cases. Many studies have provided information and proof that Self-defence acts as an effective tool to help reduce anti-social behaviour and help individuals deal with mental health issues, thus meeting the overall objectives of the project.

E.g. <https://allianceofsport.org/news/new-research-shows-boxing-combats-anti-social-behaviour/>

Other social initiatives based on self defence/martial arts having a positive influence on individuals has been further evident by the many small social boxing/MMA clubs opening and flourishing in the UK and America. This has been proven by organisations in the area such as BlackBeardMMA.

Overall, physical activity has been proven to result in a lower risk of developing many long-term conditions such as strokes, heart disease, type-2 diabetes, some cancers and more. Furthermore, the high number of endorphins that are produced through physical exercise has been proven to prevent and improve symptoms of depression and anxiety, which will play an important role in achieving the objectives set by the project.



Art awareness

Due to growing connections and partnerships with institutions such as the Royal Society of Arts, MAKERUNIVERSITY and EZ SERVICES, we will source materials, equipment, advice and expertise within the relevant artistic fields to set up necessary facilities and infrastructure. In turn, this will help support the needs, interest and requirements of the young artistic crowd of hip-happening London.

In sight of the large urban music industry flourishing around inner city London and the UK, our community is being utilised by these young creative artist for film location and the back drop to their videos, depicting life as uninspiring and having mostly negative connotations, regarding their environment and is clearly reflected in the art produced.

A well-known London-based artist D Doubles E's, 'Lovely Jubbly' music video was filmed on Havelock estate, as was Zed from the Lo - 'Little Town' and 'Pina-Colada' music videos. Demonstrating artistic interests and abilities, desperately in need of investment to grow into a successful industry in which we can help achieve with this programme. This stays in line with Sadiq Khans key manifesto 'Creative Enterprise Zones' to "protect the creative sector in the capital, increase affordable spaces for artists and entrepreneurs, and boost job and training opportunities for local people".

Art Courses have been proven to improve mental well being with many studies indicating that it can better the health, safety and education within lower income neighbourhoods. By providing an open art studio and workshops, we will tackle these issues head on to ensure the projects overall objectives are met and exceeded.

Practical skills awareness

We have highlighted practical skills awareness as a key component to meet the overall objectives of the project. With UK unemployment hitting a staggering 1.38 million people and rising at its fastest rate in almost 5 years, we feel that it is vital to address these issues from a real world standpoint.

Therefore, our proposed community workshop will provide construction and trade-based programmes of training in as many engineering fields as possible. From our own experience, qualifications and training, we have highlighted: Health and Safety (CSCS), Carpentry, joiner, Bricklaying, Electrical, Plumbing, 3D printing and Metalwork as the most relevant for employment opportunities in London's thriving construction industries.

These programmes are designed to provide a valuable insight and experience to the related industries requirements, practical skills and training needed to further their interest and skills, potentially leading into a successful career within the construction industry. The workshop will generate income to run the project from domestic/commercial opportunities and further open it doors to independent and self-employed crafts/trades people to use the facilities for small business purposes, adding to encouragement of financial independence.

Facilities

Please find a list of the key activities and commercial opportunities that will ensure the running, maintenance of the project:

3-stage awareness programme facilities:

- Physical Health Classes – Clean open spaces - basic calisthenics gym equipment. Classes for Yoga, dance, Calisthenics, Self-defence and Running/cycling Club.
- Art Workshop – sound and visual art engineering equipment, bookable studio spaces. Art workshops/classes and the sale of Gallery Artwork/Merchandise
- Skilled apprenticeship Workshop – Carpentry/joinery, bricklaying, electrical and plumbing, carbon fibre manufacturing, advanced engineering programmes. Significant income can be acquired from fulfilling domestic and commercial construction contracts in the local area. Also, generating a small commission from Woodworking classes and use of 3D printing facilities.

Additional ventures:

- Brand retail outlet – bringing a brand awareness to all interested parties, linking to all aspects of the programme. The well designed, ethical product range will entice the wider public, who will be effortlessly directed towards other facilities of the programme. All profits will be used to invest directly into programme equipment and facilities.
- Communal Eatery – Commercial premises generating income from the sale of Food and Drinks to local residents and for small events.

The facilities will offer a membership to all of the community, providing access to the yoga, calisthenics and art studios, with scheduled and booked workshops, while classes are not taking place. Designated operational partners, self-employed individuals and local businesses, will provide workshops and classes, in all focused areas. This will support the overall project objectives and be the primary source of income for the project, alongside the brand logo merchandise to run successfully and act as a template for other communities.



BRAND AWARENESS SAMPLES